Amount for Maintenance of National Highway No. 5 in Orissa

1336. SHRIRIMATI ILA PANDA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the National Highway No. 5 connecting Daitary with Paradeep Port in Orissa is in a very bad shape due to lack of proper maintenance; and

(b) if so, the amount of money sanctioned for the maintenance of this Highway during the current year?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) Development and maintenance of National Highways is a continuous process and the same (including NH-5) are being maintained in traffic worthy condition within available resources;

(b) A sum of Rs. 14.28 crores has been allocated to the Govt. of Orissa during 1996-97 for maintenance of all National Highways.

Proposal to reduce the cost of STD calls in rural areas

1337. SHRI YERRA NARAYANA-SWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to reduce the cost of STD calls made to and from rural areas;

(b) if so, the details of this proposal;

(c) whether it is a fact that rural people are paying comparatively higher charges for phone service than urban phone owners; and

(d) the steps proposed to reduce this discrimination in rents and call charges?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) No, Sir; on the other hand, significant concessions have been extended to rural subscribers w.e.f. 1.1.96, details of which are given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below).

(d) Does not arise in view of (c) above.

Statement

1. The Rural Telecom Package announced on 22 November 1995 has the following components:

(a) Free calls increased from 150 to 250 per billing cycle for rural subscribers.

(b) Registration fee reduced from Rs. 2000.00 to Rs. 1000.00 for rural subscribers serviced by exchange systems upto 10,000 lines.

(c) The telephone rental for all rural subscribers reduced to Rs. 100.00.

(d) The amount of Installation charges presently fixed at Rs. 100/- shall be maintained upto 31.3.98 for rural subscribers.

(e) Local, STD & ISD charges reduced by 25% for first 200 calls beyond free call - limit for rural subscribers.

(f) Commission payable to Panchayat PCO Franchisees enhanced from 20% to 50% on gross turn-over including the telephones to be provided to the franchisees of Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojna launched by Deptt. of Posts.

(g) Commission to STD/ISD/PCO franchisees:

(i) In rural areas enhanced to 25% on gross turn-over per month.

(ii) Commission to PCO franchisees in non-rural areas of the predominantly hilly states/tribal and hilly areas enhanced to 20% on the gross turn-over upto Rs. 50,000.00 per month and 15% there-after.

(iii) Commission to STD-PCO franchisees in the rest of the country to be paid @16% upto a gross of Rs. 20,000.00 per month. @15% on gross turn over between Rs., 20,000.00 and Rs. 50,000.00 per month and @12% on the gross turnover beyond Rs. 50,000.00 per month.

(h) Group dialling facility extended upto 30 kms in Rural hilly and tribal areas of the country and 20 kms in other areas if one of the following three conditions is met:—

(i) The calling and called exchange are both in the same SDCA.

(ii) Even if the calling and the called exchange are not within the same SDCA, the corresponding SDCAs are within a distance of 30/20 kms from each other as the case may be.

(iii) Local areas of the calling and the called exchanges have a common boundary even if they fall in adjacent SDCAs.

2. The concessional rates will take effect from 1.1.1996. The financial impact of the package will be about Rs. 200 crores per year.

Meeting of Board of Directors of All India Handloom Marketing Society

1338. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Board of Directors of the All India Handloom Marketing Society consists of four Government Directors;

(b) whether these Directors are Attending the Board meetings regularly; and

(c) the number of Board meetings have been conducted during the last three years and expenditure incurred for these meetings?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) The Board of Directors of the All India Handloom Fabric Marketing Cooperative Society Ltd. consists of three Government Directors.

(b) and (c) During the last three years, seventeen Board meetings have been conducted, out of which ten meetings have attended by the Government Directors. The expenditure incurred on seventeen Board meetings is Rs. 21.67 lakhs.

Interest Earned by Hyderabad Telecom Phone Applications

1339. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the amount lying with Hyderabad Telecom which has been deposited with phone applications;

(b) whether interest is being earned from Banks on this amount;

(c) if so, the interest collected in 1995-96 from funds collected through receipt of phone applications; and

(d) the steps proposed to to pay interest on deposits made by the public?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) The amounts in question as on 31.10.96 are as under:

OYT	Rs. 7.05 lakhs
General	Rs. 1198.47 lakhs
	Rs. 1205.52 lakhs

(b) No, Sir. The amount is deposited in Reserve Bank of India and the Department earns no interest on this.

(c) Not applicable.

(d) Simple interest at the rate allowed by SBI is allowed to the prospective subscribers under prevailing rules and is adjusted in the (first) bills issued to them after opening of the Telephone connections. If the application is